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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 10

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/1)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.5)

The President: I call on the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.5.

Mr. Birenbaum (United States of America): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization states many sound goals and objectives. In particular, we agree with the goal of:

> "Reforming the United Nations into a simpler, more focused and more integrated organization, capable of pursuing the different aspects of its mission in a mutually reinforcing way and in the most efficient manner possible, [which] has continued to be a key objective". *(A/50/1, para. 18)*

And we support the Secretary-General's management plan

> "to create a mission-driven and result-oriented organization." *(ibid., para. 17)*

We believe that the work of the efficiency board will make an important contribution to making the United Nations work better and cost less.

We note that the Secretary-General's report calls for serious consideration, in this the fiftieth-anniversary year of our Organization, of the future role and responsibilities of the United Nations. In that connection, my delegation has been impressed by the level of commitment pledged by Members to the success of the recently created High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System. This Group has the mission of crafting a blueprint for strengthening, revitalizing and reforming the United Nations of the next era. We fully support this vital work.

As a contribution to the Secretariat's efforts to improve its services to delegations, we take this opportunity to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.5, entitled "Modalities for documentation". This initiative is familiar to colleagues. It seeks to reverse the tide of documentation that is flooding the Organization. We have heard the Secretariat sound the alarm, calling the present condition a "capacity crisis". It might better be described as a "demand crisis" caused by an incessant and ever-growing demand for more and more meetings, transcripts and reports, at great cost and, too frequently, little gain to our Organization and its Member States.

The statistics are truly alarming. The Secretariat expects to spend $295 million on producing documents in New York and Geneva in the current biennium — a

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significant increase on the figure for the previous period. Yet who among us could claim that we are better informed and more enlightened by this vast volume of paper? Indeed, who can claim to have read all these documents?

This crisis cannot be resolved without far greater restraint on the part of Member States. As Ambassador Albright has said,

> "Member States should take a vow to ask, before each report that is ordered, each resolution proposed and each meeting scheduled, exactly what is the point: are we breaking new ground, or are we spending more staff resources and killing more trees just to say something that has already been said and translate it into six official languages a hundred different times?"

The draft resolution would encourage Member States to restrain their demand for documentation and streamline the material produced by the Secretariat. In particular, the Secretariat would be requested to provide orally an estimate of the cost of the relevant document before it is demanded by Member States, stricter page limits would be established, oral reports would be encouraged, the Secretariat would be asked to consolidate reports on related topics, repetitive historical material would be eliminated and the use of paperless technology would be promoted.

We believe these measures will mean less cost but better and friendlier documentation. The Secretariat will be better able to comply with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents in all official languages.

We bring this issue to the Assembly today because of the importance we attach to this initiative. We recognize that the Fifth Committee has special competence in these matters and propose to refer the draft resolution to that Committee for consideration this autumn. We look forward to working with all Members in that connection.

The President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose, if there is no objection, that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed at 11 a.m.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to add their names to the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. Yoogalingam (Malaysia): I would like to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/50/1, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization". The report, submission of which is in compliance with Article 98 of the Charter, provides a useful round-up of the activities of the United Nations. Its timely submission this year has enabled delegations to study, assess and comment on it.

Like last year's report, this year's report includes five chapters: I, "Introduction"; II, "Coordinating a comprehensive strategy"; III, "The foundations of peace: development, humanitarian action and human rights"; IV, "Expanding preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution"; and V, "Conclusion". The titles of this year's chapters have remained essentially the same as last year's, except that last year's chapter V, entitled "Conclusion", was subtitled "A continuing commitment". Unlike last year's 102-page document, this year's report is 133 pages long.

In poring over the document, it would be tempting for many of us, faced with time constraints, to read only chapters I and V, the introduction and conclusion. These two chapters sketch in a nutshell the main activities of the United Nations and give an idea of the direction of the United Nations from the perspective of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. By and large, the other three chapters delve into the details of the activities of the United Nations in 1994.

In the first chapter, entitled "Introduction", the report begins with a focus on peace-keeping issues. This is evident when the Secretary-General talks of

> "the efforts of the Organization to respond effectively to the multitude of new demands and problems resulting from the dramatic changes engendered by the end of the cold war". *(A/50/1, para. 5)*

He then refers to

> "the immediate tasks arising from the outbreak of new conflicts in different parts of the world and the resulting increase in demand for the Organization's preventive, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building services". *(ibid.)*

This chapter also acknowledges that

> "In the economic and social fields, as in the political, many areas of great concern remain where

the United Nations has not, as yet, proved equal to the challenge." *(ibid., para. 9)*

The distinct accomplishments attained have been overshadowed by the limited success of the United Nations in the area of development.

Other issues covered in the introduction include follow-up to the recent United Nations conferences, the need for reform in the structures, methods and rules of the Organization, the role of the United Nations in promoting democracy and the creation of a mission-driven and result-oriented Organization.

Chapter I, together with Chapter V, entitled "Conclusion", could be considered the executive summary of the report. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General would benefit from an executive summary.

Given the interest in reducing the length of documents as part of a set of cost-saving measures, we wish to state that these reports, as mandated in the Charter, should not be subjected to such considerations. To my delegation, the quality of the report should take precedence over its length.

We also wish to recall our observation of last year in which we underlined that the report should critique the successes and failures of the Organization. Such a critique would have contributed towards a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of this unique intergovernmental Organization.

In the final chapter, entitled "Conclusion", the Secretary-General has attempted to address future directions while pointing out fundamental problems. He has cited three immediate problems which, if not effectively addressed, could cause irreparable damage to the United Nations as a mechanism for progress. Briefly stated, the three problems are, first, the need to respect the safety and integrity of United Nations personnel in the field; secondly, the need to place the financial situation of the Organization on a sound and secure footing; and, thirdly, the need for a new vision for development, taking into account the current situation, in which funds for development are drying up.

The Assembly, through its open-ended working groups, remains seized of all these problems, especially the financing of the United Nations and matters relating to development. On the issue of the safety of United Nations personnel, it will be recalled that last year the Assembly adopted a Convention to protect United Nations personnel.

While my delegation will elaborate on these and other, related issues during the meetings of the relevant open-ended working groups, I would like to emphasize here that it is time for this Organization to look at other, independent means of financing, rather than depending merely on contributions from States. It is wholly unacceptable that Members, especially the rich ones, should fall into arrears and yet exercise special rights.

Chapters II, III and IV go in detail into the various activities undertaken by the United Nations, from peace-keeping, development, human rights and democratization to matters pertaining to the Secretariat.

In Chapter II, entitled "Coordinating a comprehensive strategy", the section dealing with the General Assembly includes facts such as these: the agenda for the forty-ninth session comprised 164 items, compared with 180 items in the previous session; the General Committee and the Main Committees held 377 meetings, as compared with a total of 401 during the forty-eighth session and 426 during the forty-seventh session; and through August 1995 the Assembly had adopted 324 resolutions, compared with 333 at the previous session.

While such details regarding the work of the General Assembly are helpful, it would also be interesting to be given statistics on the types of meetings held and resolutions and statements adopted by the Security Council. This would give us all a sense of the workload of both organs, one where sovereign equality prevails and the other where 15 Member States alone are involved. The comparison would be useful to counter the notion that the general debate in the General Assembly and the desire of delegations to pronounce themselves on an issue through the adoption of a resolution should be curtailed as an ostensible cost-saving measure. When all is said and done, the General Assembly, particularly during the general debate, remains the only universal intergovernmental forum where our leaders can clearly state their views without fear of reprisal. We must ensure that our leaders' fundamental right of expression is safeguarded.

On the report's remarks in paragraph 38 pertaining to the challenges to the Secretariat resulting from the proliferation of issue-specific open-ended working groups, Malaysia wishes to stress the need to avoid duplication and to ensure consistency. Who provides the overview of and macroperspective on the various issues discussed in these working groups, which obviously have

cross-linkages? Why are non-governmental organizations welcome in some working groups and refused participation in others, such as the working group dealing with reform of the Security Council?

On the issue of the Trusteeship Council, Malaysia shares the view that the organ should be eliminated, since the Council has completed the task entrusted to it under the Charter. As we collectively address reform of the multilateral system, appropriate changes in this connection could be made.

Still in Chapter II, the report dwells at length on the steps taken to create a mission-driven and result-oriented Organization. Malaysia's position was succinctly stated in its Prime Minister's address to the General Assembly:

> "Reform of the United Nations also requires the cleansing of the bureaucratic Augean stables in the Secretariat. The morale of the international civil service is at its lowest ebb. The excesses and the fat must be trimmed, but failure to do so must not be used as an excuse for not paying dues or for opting out". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 12th meeting, p. 4)*

On Chapter III, "The foundations of peace: development, humanitarian action and human rights", Malaysia agrees fully with the statement

> "that development should be recognized as the foremost and most far-reaching task of our time". *(A/50/1, para. 182)*

This chapter deals with the gamut of issues covered by the Second and Third Committees relating to economic growth and development. The style of its section E, entitled "The humanitarian imperative", unlike the generally narrative style of the rest of Chapters II, III and IV, is incisive, providing food for thought for all delegations. In paragraph 474, for instance, the report notes the linkage between the scale and depth of suffering in conflict situations and disregard for fundamental humanitarian principles. The report adds that

> "In many instances, the suffering endured by civilians is not an incidental element of political and military strategies but constitutes its major objective. The conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda are alarming examples of what occurs when civilians are subjected to the full brutality of contemporary warfare and gross violations of human rights. Determination must be shown to enforce the rule of law and to hold accountable those who are responsible for heinous crimes". *(A/50/1, para. 474)*

This is an instance of the report's making a point of indicating how an issue could be handled.

Chapter IV, "Expanding preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution", is essentially devoted to United Nations peace-keeping activities. Malaysia has been consistently active in United Nations peace-keeping activities and remains one of the major troop-contributing countries. An area of concern pertains to consultations between the troop contributors and the Security Council. Despite the statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 4 November 1994, consultations remain *ad hoc*. Consistent with Article 44 of the Charter, it is time for such consultations to be regularized. We look forward to elaborating on our position during the forthcoming Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) debate on matters relating to all aspects of peace-keeping.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is critical to our debate and our consequent actions. While we must take stock of the activities of the preceding year, it is equally, if not more, important that we benefit from the experience in the future. A revitalized United Nations, including a restructured and democratic Security Council, must be geared to face the challenges of the next century. It must promote a common agenda in the collective interest of all of us.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The item entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization" is, in our opinion, one of the most important of the current session. We therefore thank the Secretary-General for his work in that regard.

On the threshold of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, new universal questions arise more emphatically than ever before: what will be the objectives and priorities of the United Nations in the face of the urgent problems challenging mankind? What will be the precepts, powers and competence of the international Organization that emerged from the will of sovereign States and is called on to carry out joint action on the basis of common credos and principles?

It would be impossible to cover in a single statement the wide spectrum of topics contained in the report of the Secretary-General; therefore, we would like to focus on those which my delegation believes to be of fundamental importances, both conceptually and practically.

The Secretary-General states that the Organization is called upon to give an effective response to the number of new demands and problems resulting from the dramatic changes associated with the end of the cold war. In this regard, he underlines the "increase in demand for the Organization's preventive peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building *(A/50/1, para. 5)* while reiterating that "the United Nations remained determined to pay more attention to the foundations of peace, not least those lying in the realm of economic and social development". *(A/50/1, para. 6)*

In the spirit of giving an accurate interpretation of the assertions made by the Secretary-General, we have tried to find compatibility between the contraposition peace-development, which is the translation of the language of that statement, and the assertions contained in the report on the work of the Organization presented to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session, in which the Secretary-General seemed to be determined, first of all, to correct

> "the widespread misperception of the United Nations as an organization dedicated primarily to peace-keeping". *(A/49/1, para. 1)*

We could agree on the fact that the turbulent and dramatic developments which have shaken some areas of the planet, or the everyday attempts against the well-being of peoples, against human rights and the very dignity of human beings in other parts of the world have given rise to a unanimous call for peace. However, many of these developments have a common factor: the economic and social problems affecting almost all of humanity. In this sense, the binomial peace-development, the interrelation between the terms, not their contraposition, and the crucial importance of "development" could not be overlooked. Consequently, if the reading or the message of the Secretary-General were different, they would differ essentially from the statements contained in the report submitted at the forty-ninth session, which were acknowledged and commended by the Cuban delegation.

As to the work of the Organization on the elaboration and adoption of an "Agenda for Development", the Cuban delegation has carefully read the particular reference to Cuba in this year's report of the Secretary-General, as well as the contribution and support offered to this commitment by important documents such as the Halifax communiqué of June 1995. Actually, the developing countries, for which "an agenda for development" is a priority, appreciate any contribution aimed at promoting the adoption and implementation of such a global directive; but, from the very moment of its inception, the developing countries have clearly defined the priorities and dimensions of that future agenda. We hope that the offers to assist us in the achievement of this goal and the sincere and voluntary willingness to give

> "a fresh approach to international cooperation and to define the particular contribution expected of United Nations bodies" *(A/50/1, para. 12)*

to that Agenda would be compatible with the priorities and dimensions attributed to development by the developing countries themselves.

Throughout the report, reference is made to the need to restructure the Organization. This is based on the view that it would be necessary to reform "the United Nations into a simpler, more focused and more integrated organization". *(A/50/1, para. 18)* The orientation and integrity of the objectives and actions of the Organization are undoubtedly a result of the fundamental interest and relevance in the necessary process of reforms.

We support all efforts aimed at making the United Nations a more efficient and effective organization that could respond to the decisions and interests of all its Member States. We think that every process of reform should be carried out with the appropriate participation and prior approval of the Member States, taking as an essential principle full implementation of the mandates adopted by the General Assembly. Only then will the credibility and validity of that process be assured.

The success of reform will be mostly based, as expected, on the financial stability of the Organization, which will depend, first and foremost, on the fulfilment by all Member States of their obligations under Article 19 of the Charter. Unconditional payment by the major contributor will also be essential to the achievement of such financial stability. The rational and efficient use of resources will also contribute to more effective accomplishment of the tasks incumbent on the Organization. However, saving could not be, in any way, the goal of the United Nations, but rather the means to better achieve its objectives. Thus, the path towards efficiency should not interfere with the mandates, the

purposes and principles, or the universal character of this Organization.

Peace-keeping operations have increased in number and complexity. However, today, as never before, the principles invoked by the international community, namely, the consent of the parties in conflict as an essential condition for the establishment of a peace-keeping operation; and respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of States, *inter alia*, continue to be extremely relevant principles. Agreements on the status of peace-keeping forces should be a faithful expression of the consent, the will and the disposition of the Member States concerned to pay their contributions. As indicated by recent experience, the maintenance of peace together with acts of coercion is not the proper response when the consent or cooperation of the parties in conflict does not exist. In our opinion the United Nations can be efficient only as long as the Member States allow it to be.

The Security Council should never be the umbrella covering unilateral decisions of States or groups of States to intervene in situations which are exclusively within the internal jurisdiction of States.

A few days ago in this General Assembly Hall we approved the allocation of items to the various Committees and the plenary General Assembly. In that allocation, as is our tradition, item 119: "Pattern of Conferences" was assigned to the Fifth Committee. We are all aware that the debate on that item is based on the report of the Committee on Conferences, a subsidiary body of the Fifth Committee. At this very time, that main Committee is also considering the item on "Programme planning". Also by a decision on the part of Member States, the Fifth Committee has been entrusted with analysing administrative and budgetary questions. Furthermore, it is important to note the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/220, which refers in its annex to the consideration of programme planning as part of our search for efficiency and improved use of resources.

We are all aware that this year we must also consider the control and limitation of documentation. My delegation has taken note of the submission of draft resolution A/50/L.5 and is prepared to consider it in the Fifth Committee under the appropriate item.

Our comments on the report of the Secretary-General for this period could be extensive and numerous. We agree on many aspects and appreciate the accuracy and depth of many of his approaches. There are also areas of disagreement, such as the Secretary-General's approach to items such as development, the process of reform and restructuring of the system, and the assessment of the nature, mandate and objectives of a number of bodies of the United Nations system.

However, beyond the differences, my country offers a flexible readiness and a constructive spirit in favour of dialogue and negotiation among Member States to attain fair, essential and long-lasting solutions aimed not only at identifying and uniting our actions and objectives, but also at rescuing and realizing through just, necessary international action the universal character of the Organization and its essential goal: to contribute to the well-being of mankind.

Mr. de Silva (Sri Lanka): On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, I would like to express our appreciation for the thoroughness with which the Secretary-General has prepared his report on the work of the Organization. I am pleased to express our sense of satisfaction with the account of the work of the United Nations as detailed in that report. We congratulate the Secretary-General on its comprehensiveness, its clarity of exposition and its balanced evaluation of the work of the Organization in the manifold fields of activity undertaken during the last year. We shall, however, reserve our detailed comments on specific questions that are of special concern to us for when they come up for discussion under the relevant agenda items, and shall content ourselves, for the present, with certain general observations upon a broad survey of the work of the United Nations in the context of the international scene.

The wave of euphoria that marked the end of the cold war at the beginning of this decade appears to have receded as swiftly as it swept upon us. A mood of apprehensiveness tinged with misgivings has overtaken us. We stand exposed to the harsh realities of a host of new conflicts that have proved to be quite intractable. They have made, and continue to make, heavy demands on the services of the United Nations in peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building.

The financial cost of these new demands has proved to be a severe strain upon an Organization which had already reached a critical point in respect of its financial viability. A cloud of pessimism and dark foreboding for the future arose as a result of the disastrous events in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia. But, fortunately, the story is not one of unmitigated disaster.

Our faith in the Organization has to some extent been redeemed by its modest successes in Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Angola; this is surely cause for hope and thankfulness and strengthens our determination to succeed in our future endeavours.

At the same time, we remind ourselves of the ever-present need to secure the foundation for a durable peace, which lies in the economic and social sphere that perennially cries out for attention but which is often drowned out by more strident voices demanding attention for causes more sensational. We cannot but endorse the Secretary-General's emphasis on the less spectacular work of the United Nations and its agencies in this field of vital activity, and express the fervent hope that the ongoing discussions on "An Agenda for Development" will finally yield fruitful results.

We are heartened by the new impetus given to the core issues of development, poverty, unemployment and social disintegration by the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen and wait with great expectation for the eventual outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, which has just been concluded. We consider this to have been an epoch-making event affecting all women, who constitute nearly half the people of this Earth.

This year's report of the Secretary-General appears at first sight to highlight the fact that, despite the foundational concerns of the United Nations, which are of universal and perennial interest to all Member States — namely the economic, social and humanitarian work of the Organization, which is an ongoing enterprise — what has gripped public attention and often evoked critical comment has been the high-visibility efforts of the United Nations in the field of preventing, containing and resolving international conflicts. But, as a corrective to this approach, the Secretary-General's report also underscores the broadly pervasive nature of the regular and steady work of the United Nations and its multifaceted character that is ever responsive to the changes that are taking place around us. This aspect of the report needs to be borne in mind for a fair and correct assessment of the work of the Organization. This indeed is a realistic approach which, at the same time, helps to strengthen inspire and renew our commitment to the noble ideals of the United Nations during this fiftieth anniversary, which is a time for reflection and thought and not merely self-congratulation.

We are indeed happy to observe the note of optimism sounded in the report when the Secretary-General refers to the new spirit and momentum that are gathering in the international community, which will revitalize and re-energize the Organization as we enter this landmark year for the United Nations. We express the hope that it will infuse all its work in the future. We also share the hopes of the Secretary-General on the efforts to make the United Nations an institution that is

> "more intellectually creative, more financially stable, more managerially effective and more responsive to all sectors of society". *(A/50/1, para. 992)*

We also welcome the spirit of realism that is struck by the report when it cautions us of the need to take note of institutional weaknesses and failed enterprises. These are the consequences of inadequate attention and care being paid to framing the mandates issued by organs of the United Nations, which often lack clarity. These failures are also due to the paucity and meagre quality of the financial and material resources available to the Organization and, not least, to the failure of its Member States to comply with the obligations of membership, which are both imperative and mandatory for its successful working. Concurrently with the globalization of the activities of the United Nations, it is but natural that institutional weaknesses and flawed structures of the Organization will become more evident and will increase in scale. It has also to some extent generated and continues to generate a syndrome of fear and isolationism. These are of course highly detrimental to the interests of the United Nations, and even have destructive potential for the future. They need our immediate and urgent attention.

We are indeed appreciative of the candour and sense of realism that characterize the Secretary-General's report. I have no doubt that there will be general agreement that it is our duty and responsibility to grasp the full impact of its observations and address ourselves to the remedial action that we must assuredly embark upon if we are concerned about the future of this Organization. The one compelling message that emerges from this report, which must be crystal clear to all of us, is the paramount need to preserve and perpetuate this hallowed institution as the only instrument and mechanism for the security and betterment of mankind. We therefore support the widespread calls for reform of the United Nations in order to make it a more effective instrument for the realization of the ideals that inspired its foundation half a century ago. There is no need to add

that this must be on the basis of a general consensus, which must emerge through discussion and debate.

We support the establishment of an open-ended high-level working group of the General Assembly that would undertake a thorough review of all relevant United Nations materials, taking into account the submissions made by Member States and the resources of knowledge and analysis made available through the various independent studies and reports relating to the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system.

Any State that has the future existence and welfare of the United Nations at heart must surely take cognizance of the three serious problems to which the Secretary-General has drawn attention in paragraphs 1002 to 1004 of his report. They are, first, the safety and integrity of United Nations personnel in the various missions that have been undertaken. We cannot allow a situation in which those engaged in peace-keeping or in humanitarian missions find their lives and safety endangered. The second problem is the deteriorating financial situation of the Organization; practical steps have to be taken to reverse this trend. The third is the dwindling resources being made available for development, a situation that is aggravated by the increasing demands made on account of peace-keeping. Sustainable human development is the life-blood of all nations and unless we ensure that it becomes a reality, a bleak future awaits us at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

In conclusion may I, on behalf of my delegation, once again express our grateful thanks for this invaluable study and survey of the events that have occurred and issues that have arisen since the last session of the General Assembly. We are supportive of the Secretary-General's efforts to streamline the Organization to ensure greater efficiency. We hope that the more pressing reforms will be put in place expeditiously and that they will contribute to the effective management of the Organization.

Mr. Rowe (Australia): We wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and forward-looking report on the work of the Organization. The report demonstrates clearly the challenges and opportunities which continue to face the United Nations in an increasingly complex global environment. It also outlines the significant action that has been taken in many areas over the past year to strengthen the role and functioning of the Organization to respond effectively to those challenges and opportunities, to realize fully the goals embodied in the Charter. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and the staff of the Secretariat for their commitment to achieving this objective.

The Secretary-General notes that there continues to be a widespread misperception of the United Nations as an Organization dedicated primarily to peace-keeping. This is, however, as the Secretary-General points out, only part — but a vitally important one — of the picture. The United Nations has an equally vital role to play in strengthening the foundations of peace through giving more attention to economic and social development.

The past few turbulent years of the United Nations experience on the ground in peace-keeping and peace enforcement have underlined the need for it to improve the effectiveness of its work in these important fields. Australia has therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's further work in this area in his very lucid 1995 Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace". In our own contributions to the debates on these issues, we have argued for the clearest possible thinking to be given to the achievability of objectives right across the whole spectrum of responses to security problems, from peace-building to peace-maintenance to peace-restoration to peace-enforcement.

We have consistently argued also that, if the United Nations is to be able to meet effectively the security challenges of the post-cold-war world, it must begin to devote more resources to preventive strategies than to reactive strategies. It makes more sense to concentrate on prevention than on after-the-event peace restoration, both for inter-State conflict and in the, unhappily, now far more common case of intra-State conflict. We are therefore pleased to note the measures which the Secretary-General has taken to strengthen the Secretariat's preventive diplomacy capacity, including coordination. We also commend the Secretary-General's undertaking to redouble his efforts in the preventive diplomacy field.

The United Nations should also always be prepared to lend its support and encouragement to preventive diplomacy and peacemaking efforts taking place outside the formal framework of the United Nations system, such as we have seen recently in relation to the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East, and should remain particularly alert to the opportunities envisaged in the Charter for advancing the peace agenda through regional organizations. In this context, we in the Asia-Pacific region have been pleased with the rapid evolution of the

Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations over the past two years as a new vehicle for dialogue, and trust- and confidence-building in our own region.

While the security agenda tends to dominate most popular perceptions of the United Nations role, we in the international community must never allow our attention to be diverted from the demands of the development agenda, now as pressing as ever.

The United Nations of the future must, as a matter of the most urgent priority, forge a new agenda for development and reshape its relevant institutions to implement that agenda effectively. This is as important as any task it faces in the service of the human family, and in recreating itself as an institution fit for the twenty-first century. The agenda is available for all to see. It has been fully described in the six global Conferences held by the United Nations in the last four years — the Conferences on children, the environment, human rights, population, social development and women. There have also been important studies by the international financial institutions and by academic institutions. We know now what we need to do. We must therefore resolve, politically, to do it.

For these reasons, Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Development", following on as it does from "An Agenda for Peace". Among other important considerations, it fully recognizes the relationship between peace and development, acknowledging that equitable development eradicates many of the socio-political conditions in which threats to peace breed. And, very importantly, it places emphasis on individual human beings as the subjects and beneficiaries of our developmental efforts. It recognizes that economies should serve people.

We also applaud the focus the Secretary-General has placed on practical international cooperation for global human security, for example, in the areas of emergency humanitarian assistance, effective governance and the key social issues which formed the agenda of the World Summit on Social Development.

A more integrated effort will clearly be required of the United Nations system if the objectives set out in "An Agenda for Development" are to be achieved. It is imperative that we improve the system's ability to develop and implement social and economic development programmes in a more coordinated and coherent manner, including by finding ways to allow the Bretton Woods institutions and United Nations bodies to work in closer harmony.

In pursuing these various themes it is important, however, for us not to lose sight of those geographic regions where particular focus is still required, and where the United Nations role is more vital than ever. Africa's influence and importance continue to be felt throughout the world in every field of human activity and culture. Exciting political developments, including the ending of apartheid, have been accompanied by major new efforts to restructure and reform national economies; those efforts demand the continued support of the international community, and in particular the United Nations system. Other regions where the United Nations needs to play a particular role to facilitate economic and social development are the Central Asian Republics, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and in a number of areas in the Indian Ocean region.

The institutions of the United Nations relevant to economic and social development are urgently in need of reform, as is reflected in the Secretary-General's report. The General Assembly has created the High-level Working Group needed for political consensus on this. It must complete its work in this fiftieth anniversary year, and it must do so creatively, setting aside past vested interests in the system. We must implement the development agenda of the future in a way which ensures a productive and fair place in the global economy for all States.

No agendas of substance, no matter how clear in concept and well-coordinated in principle they may be, will mean anything to people if they cannot be implemented through effective organizational structures and instruments. There has been widespread recognition in recent years that the structure of the United Nations that has grown up during the last 50 years is simply not adequate to the tasks of the next fifty.

We now have an embarrassment of riches with respect to ideas and proposals for change to the United Nations Organization, some of which are referred to in the Secretary-General's report. Just as it is urgent that we complete work on "An Agenda for Development" in this fiftieth year, it is equally urgent that we complete the work of the High-level Working Group on the reform of the United Nations system, also within the fiftieth year.

We commend the Secretary-General for having initiated a management plan with five objectives which,

if realized, would undoubtedly go a long way to reforming the United Nations and producing the

> "simpler, more focused and more integrated organization, capable of pursuing the different aspects of its mission in a mutually reinforcing way and in the most efficient manner possible" *(A/50/1, para. 18)*,

which Australia has long advocated.

We also endorse strongly the Secretary-General's commitment to achieving a more adequate and reliable financial base for the Organization. Not only do we have a short-term financial problem, we have a longer-term problem, which requires new approaches. In this regard, as Senator Evans, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, said in his general debate statement on 2 October 1995,

> "it is time to look again — this time very seriously indeed — at the options which exist for supplementing Member States' contributions with external sources of finance" *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 15th meeting, p. 15.)*

such as through levies on foreign exchange transactions and on international air travel.

The Secretary-General observes in his report that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is an occasion to address ways to regain that momentum in world affairs that appeared so dramatically at the outset of this decade.

We agree, and the United Nations has a crucial role to play in regaining this momentum. For it to do so effectively, the United Nations of the future will need to be an Organization which works and speaks for all its Members, no matter how large or small, and whose legitimacy is thus without question. It must be an Organization better oriented to performance, to delivery to people of the things they need and have a right to expect.

And it must be an Organization which seeks to reintegrate, and better coordinate, the implementation of the three basic United Nations objectives so clearly articulated at San Francisco 50 years ago — the objectives of peace (meeting the need for security), development (meeting economic needs) and human rights and justice (meeting the need for individual and group dignity and liberty).

The Secretary-General's report is evidence, and encouragement, that we recognize what needs to be done, that we are making progress in reshaping the Organization for the twenty-first century, but that much still remains to be done. We must keep up the momentum.

Mr. Henze (Germany): First of all I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on what he rightly called a "landmark year". Like preceding speakers, we agree with the emphasis he has placed on the need for reforms. The United Nations has reached a crossroads where we have to decide whether we need and whether we want a United Nations capable of meeting the challenges not only of the next century, but even of today. In our discussions we too often lose sight of these fundamental questions, get lost in minuscule problems and have difficulty in finding a way out.

Let me start with the reform of the Security Council. This work did not begin because one country or another wanted changes, but because there was a consensus that neither the composition nor the working methods of the present Council corresponded any longer to the changes in the United Nations, its membership and tasks. That is why we all agreed in the report of the Open-ended Working Group that the Council should be expanded and its working methods reviewed — a view which was shared by the Council itself in the statement it issued to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. And, last but not least, the statements in this year's general debate have shown that a great majority of States consider the reform of the Security Council an urgent task and wish that the necessary steps in this direction be taken now.

While there is agreement that the Security Council should be enlarged, the discussion about how this is to be accomplished continues. We have reports and proposals. What is needed now is some creativity to reconcile the different ideas and interests, with the aim of a strengthened, representative and modern Security Council.

A considerable number of States from all continents and regional groups, in their statements at the General Assembly, have referred to Germany as a country they wish to see as a permanent member of the Council. We are grateful for this proof of confidence. Having said this, we are aware of the fact that reform of the Council is not just about the interests of individual countries. Its aim must be to enable the United Nations to adjust to a

changing environment and to cope with the challenges of the next millennium. If the United Nations community as a whole calls on Germany to contribute to this immense task we will be ready to assume the responsibility. We will extend our commitment and build on our past contribution to strengthen the United Nations.

Enlargement, however, cannot be limited to the addition of one or two countries. We have never left any doubt that it has to include additional seats for the regions of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. Furthermore, we need reform of the working methods of the Council to increase its efficiency and transparency. In this area, some progress has already been made. But here too more work is needed. Like other countries, we are of the view that the two elements — enlargement and improvement of working methods — are closely linked. Real reform will require solutions for both of them.

As the report of the Secretary-General points out, the difficulties of peace-keeping should not divert attention from the other dimensions of the work of the Organization, which are equally — and in the long run, even more — essential. There can be no lasting peace without economic and social development. Here again the international context and the challenges to the United Nations have greatly changed. Progress is visible in many countries, whereas others remain at the margins of development.

Adaptation to a changed and rapidly changing global environment has become a prime prerequisite for a more effective United Nations system in the field of development. Germany is fully committed to this process, and I should like to reiterate my country's appreciation of the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to give direction to the debate through his contribution, in the shape of "An Agenda for Development", of May 1994, and the concrete steps he is taking to make the Organization more responsive and effective.

The Open-ended Working Group charged with this very important task has recently been able to make considerable progress under the excellent guidance of its two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Mongbé and Ambassador Osvald. We are confident that their assiduous efforts to provide guidance and leadership will enable us to move forward with regard to all aspects of the Agenda. You have our full support, Mr. President, in the matter of achieving substantial results during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The Economic and Social Council, in its agreed conclusions on the coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences, has made a significant contribution to this work, and this should be amply reflected in the final text. The Economic and Social Council's role as an organ of the United Nations should be more fully realized, particularly its job of coordinating United Nations activities in the economic, social and related fields and giving specific guidance in conformity with the overall consensus reached in the General Assembly. It should play the central role in the coordination of follow-up and implementation in respect of the major United Nations conferences, and the General Assembly should support it fully in this task.

In his report, the Secretary-General states that reforming the United Nations into a simpler, more focused and more integrated Organization has been a key objective of his efforts since he took office in January 1992. I would like to emphasize that my Government attaches the highest priority to this objective, particularly in the social, economic and related fields, where a great number of organizations, agencies and programmes have been established, with various missions and mandates. Coordination and cooperation is not always the pattern of behaviour amongst them; duplication and overlap are not unusual. The new realities of globalized markets and a rapidly changing world should make us react not with an ever-growing number of institutions, mechanisms and bodies but with firm and clear priorities and goals and with institutions capable of adapting.

We are fully aware, as is the Secretary-General, that Secretariat reform must be part of a larger restructuring effort, including the intergovernmental machinery. We will continue to support a more dynamic relationship among the main intergovernmental organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We would also like to see more interaction between the Secretariat's Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Economic and Social Council. An open and frank dialogue on priorities, emerging issues and the institutional response is an essential element of the ongoing reform process.

The Secretary-General has held extensive consultations during the year with the Heads of the Bretton Woods institutions and the Executive Heads of the other agencies on the follow-up to the United Nations conferences and on a renewed effort in support of African development. We believe that the institutional

and the substantive issues are closely interrelated, and would be most interested in a more detailed account of the coordination among all United Nations institutions working for development in Africa. We hope that the complementarity between the country strategy notes and the policy framework papers under the aegis of the Bretton Woods institutions can be enhanced, recognizing that both institutions have their particular fields of competence. The Economic and Social Council, in our view, would be an appropriate forum for further discussion of this matter.

Another area vital for the survival of the United Nations is the financial situation. Here, two kinds of reform are necessary. On one hand, the financial system as such must be changed; on the other hand, the United Nations system must be made more efficient. By "financial system as such" I mean the scale of assessments, the methodology of calculation — which stipulates, according to article 19 of the Charter, that a Member may lose its right to vote and other penalties or incentives — as well as all other questions that have been or are being discussed in the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the Organization.

Reform of the financial system must result in a more equitable scale of assessments — that is, the assessments owed by each Member State should be as close as possible to its actual capacity to pay. This new scale of assessments must be accompanied by regulations that entice Member States to pay their contributions on time and in full. The work of the High-level Open-ended Working Group should be resumed as soon as possible. An important element of any reform and its implementation will be the payment of arrears.

Financial reforms have to be accompanied by increases in efficiency within the United Nations. An efficient Organization will more easily entice Member States to fulfil their financial obligations in full and on time. In other words, efficiency offers an incentive to pay. Furthermore, only an increase in efficiency can ensure that the United Nations will continue to have sufficient funds at its disposal for priority programmes.

In times of decreasing national budgets, the United Nations cannot assume that its budget can be increased. This means that only through efficiency gains in the administrative sector can sufficient funds be made available for programmes and missions. The achievement of this goal is primarily a task for the Secretary-General. My delegation is pleased that he has already taken the first steps. We support his efforts to use the budgetary process to increase the efficiency of the Organization, and we welcome the fact that the draft budget for 1996-97 shows the first signs of success. We also note that the Secretary-General has begun to initiate improvements in many areas, such as personnel management and procurement, and has established an efficiency board with a view to making the Organization more efficient and, thus, more attractive for Member States.

We believe that an efficient Office of Internal Oversight Services is another prerequisite to safeguard the Organization's attractiveness now and, equally important, for the future.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): The report (A/50/1) of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is an important and useful document. It provides a comprehensive review of the activities of the United Nations in the past year and valuable insight into the efforts of the Organization to adjust to the needs of our time.

In general, the report is a testimony to the diversity and vigour of United Nations activities. It reflects the current trends in the Organization's development and the serious obstacles that continue to impede the desired progress. It shows that the complexity of the post-cold-war era represents a serious problem for the United Nations, perhaps even more serious than the global political and military tension which characterized the bipolar world of the preceding period.

The Organization continues to be engaged in a variety of demanding activities. Every section of the report, including, typically, the section on the United Nations Secretariat, demonstrates that variety. For example, the work of the Office of Legal Affairs, outlined in paragraphs 102 to 116, now ranges from the implementation of various decisions of the Security Council, including those relating to the ad hoc Tribunals dealing with violations of international humanitarian law, to a variety of aspects of the law of the sea and the exploration of new areas of codification and implementation of international law.

The work of the bodies within the framework of the Economic and Social Council has expanded substantially after the recent series of world conferences, and the question of the coherent implementation of commitments adopted at those conferences represents the main task of these bodies.

The Organization continues to experience the sobering effects that were bound to follow the period of high expectations and ambitious decisions in the domain of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The financial situation of the Organization continues to be grim. However, the efforts of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the Organization are commendable and deserve the fullest support. We hope that they will contribute to improvements in the payment of assessed contributions and, thus, to the normal functioning of the budget for the coming biennium. As a Member State that pays its assessed contributions to the regular budget in full and on time, Slovenia hopes that the number of Members in this category will substantially increase in the coming year.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a number of valuable reflections on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. In this context, it is rightly emphasized that the Organization is facing a variety of new situations, including new types of military conflict which might be considered to represent threats to the peace.

The questions concerning the nature of contemporary armed conflicts have been discussed in the General Assembly's Working Group on An Agenda for Peace, as well as in the Security Council. These discussions deal with an important aspect of the work of the United Nations and should continue, with a view to clarifying the pertinent issues. Let me offer some thoughts in this regard.

In general, one may agree that the new international political environment is characterized by military conflicts which are in some respects different from those of the past, as the Secretary-General says in the report. The political actors involved in such situations have increased in number and become more diverse. The current wars by proxy are sometimes fought on behalf of smaller States and for a variety of political agendas. Often, the inter-State aspects are less apparent or are deliberately obscured. However, merely qualifying such conflicts as internal will not do. Additional efforts are needed in the analysis of their causes and actors.

It is sometimes suggested that ethnic and religious factors are decisive in certain conflicts, which are therefore described as ethnic or religious. We would like to caution against hasty categorizations by the use of these terms. A look into the past would help to reveal the presence of ethnic and religious elements in many wars of the past and other, non-ethnic and non-religious elements in the conflicts of the present. It is probably possible to speak of the coefficient of the ethnic element in most of the military conflicts in human history. What is really necessary, however — perhaps today more than ever before — is careful identification of the real actors in each situation and the identification of their actual agendas. Only if this is done can one hope that the response to a given situation by the United Nations or by other international mechanisms will correspond to the actual needs.

I spoke of the changing nature of the issues dealt with by the Security Council also because this is one of the reasons for the needed reform of the Council, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations. There are, of course, other reasons, including the need to enhance the representative character of the Council and the level of support from United Nations Members for the work and decisions of the Council.

For all these reasons, an appropriate expansion of the number of both the permanent and the non-permanent members of the Security Council is called for. We shall address the pertinent issues in some detail under the appropriate agenda item later on. Suffice it to say at this stage that the progress made in efforts for the reform of the Security Council is relatively slow and needs to be energized.

The difficulties in the process of Security Council reform are not surprising, and are perhaps a good example of the difficulties encountered in the efforts for the reform of various other areas of the Organization's activity.

Another area where successful reform is overdue is the work of the Economic and Social Council and various bodies and organizations coordinated by that principal United Nations organ. The report of the Secretary-General provides an impressive account of work currently under way and of the efforts to improve coordination. However, more needs to be done.

In the current thinking about the necessary reform measures, it is vital to keep in mind the reality of the dynamic change in the global economic and social spheres, the ever growing importance of market forces and the global nature of the changes. Changes in institutional structures, including United Nations structures, have to be conceived with full awareness of this reality.

Given the diminishing role of the State in most economic matters, it seems inappropriate to propose the establishment of an additional principal organ of the United Nations — an economic security council — as has been envisaged in some proposals for reform formulated outside the United Nations.

On the other hand, it also seems inappropriate to de-link the economic and social component by, for example, creating two separate councils: an economic council and a social council. The World Summit for Social Development proved the importance of considering the economic and social aspects of development as parts of a comprehensive approach which ought to proceed from the notion of the centrality of the human person in development.

The commitments and programmes adopted at the recent world conferences have given rise to the question of the implementation of the agreed documents. These tasks are specific, and the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in this context is critical. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization mentions, for example, that more than 40 Ministers attended the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. This demonstrates the importance of that particular Commission.

It would be desirable for all t commissions given new substantive tasks as a result of recent world conferences to become places of meaningful policy-making at an appropriately practical level. The results so far have been mixed, and it is necessary to look into the reasons for the uneven levels of activity of different commissions. If additional resources are needed for the proper preparation of their work, then such resources must be made available. This would be a useful investment, for nothing is more harmful for any ongoing project than disappointment resulting from insufficient implementation.

Before concluding, I wish to mention another aspect of United Nations activities in which reform efforts are necessary: efforts for the implementation of human rights. The United Nations has done much in the field of standard-setting and in the development of a series of institutional mechanisms. It is necessary that these mechanisms work in a coordinated manner with a view to achieving maximum effect. The need to further improve the objectivity of human rights work — and I stress "objectivity" — and the quality of reports prepared in this context is constantly growing. To a large extent, success in this domain will depend on improvements in the relevant parts of the Secretariat and on a reasonable amount of additional resources.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization reminds us in a variety of ways of the urgency of United Nations reforms. Let us make this debate a contribution in the efforts for genuine progress and reform.

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the work of the General Assembly at this critical juncture in its history.

My delegation is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1). We consider that discussion of this report in the General Assembly affords Member States an excellent opportunity to exchange views on the functioning of the Organization, to evaluate results, and to lay down guidelines for future action.

The Secretary-General describes the report as:

> "an effort at transparency, revealing both the strengths and weaknesses of the Organization to the widest possible audience". (*A/50/1, para. 994*)

The report contains proposals and ideas which call for deeper reflection on the functioning and effectiveness of our Organization. Such proposals and ideas supplement those put forward by Member States during discussions in various General Assembly working groups, especially the Working Group on reform of the Security Council, and the Working Group on "An Agenda for Peace". The principal idea that emerged from those discussions and which merits deep consideration concerns the need to enhance democracy and to strengthen the spirit of collective work in the decision-making process and the working methods of the United Nations and its principal organs.

The experience of the past 50 years, and particularly of the past five years, has shown that the weakness of the democratic nature and the insufficiency of the spirit of collective work in the decision-making process in the principal organs of the United Nations have made those organs vulnerable to the influence of major Powers. This, in turn, has impacted negatively on the credibility and independence of the United Nations.

During the cold-war era, the conflicts of interest between the two super-Powers paralysed many of the activities of United Nations organs. After the cold war, the supremacy of one super-Power enabled that Power to impose its views, interests and policies on the United Nations to the detriment of the interests of the majority of Member States and the very principles of the Charter. We do not need to go far in search of proof. Mr. James Baker, the former Secretary of State of the United States, declared that fact on 21 June 1995:

> "Let me make one point very, very clear to you. Our use of the United Nations was not driven by any starry-eyed commitment to multilateralism. It was driven by a sober recognition of the usefulness of the United Nations as a vehicle for American leadership. I think that we have to always remember that the United Nations is a means; it is not an end for American foreign policy".

It is worth noting that Mr. Baker was Secretary of State during the period from 1989 to 1992, the very period in which the resolutions imposing comprehensive sanctions against Iraq were adopted.

The Secretary-General's report contains a section entitled "Iraq-Kuwait". Although we do not agree with many formulations contained in it, I shall comment on three points only:

First, I reiterate what the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq stated from this rostrum just a few days ago:

> "Despite all the propaganda, Iraq does not have any proscribed weapons, equipment, devices or material, and this is the essence of resolution 687 (1991). We affirm our determination to continue our cooperation with the Special Commission and the IAEA to close the weapons file in accordance with the relevant resolutions and have the embargo against Iraq lifted". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 21st meeting, p. 9)*

The IAEA's report of 6 October 1995 to the Security Council confirms that Iraq is honouring this commitment. The report states that:

> "The level of practical cooperation by Iraqi counterparts in facilitating and expediting IAEA's field work continues to be high". *(S/1995/844, appendix, para. 18)*

The same report indicates also that:

> "The reporting requirements stipulated in paragraph 22 and Annex 2 of the Plan are being fulfilled regularly at six-month intervals by the Iraqi authorities". *(Ibid., para. 19)*

Secondly, the Secretary-General's report referred to what it called "the recent Turkish military operations on the Turkish/Iraq border" *(A/50/1, para. 712)*. This description is not accurate. The Turkish operations were a military invasion of Iraq's territory. The Security Council took no action to deter this aggression, in pursuance of its policy of double standards towards Iraq.

Thirdly, the Secretary-General describes the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi population as follows:

> "Health conditions have continued to deteriorate throughout the country because of shortages of essential drugs and medical supplies. The situation is further aggravated by the inadequate supply of potable water and poor sanitation facilities, as essential equipment and spare parts are lacking to rehabilitate the water, sewage and electricity supply systems". *(Ibid., para. 711)*

Elsewhere the Secretary-General states that:

> "By all accounts, children are increasingly dying of ailments linked to malnutrition and lack of adequate medical care". *(Ibid., para. 716)*

The report also warns that hunger threatens the lives of over 1 million Iraqi civilians.

We hope that these paragraphs will bring home to the international community the fact that the human tragedy of the Iraqi population is caused by Security Council resolutions, and that there is no reason whatsoever for the continuation of this tragedy.

The United Nations was created to prevent wars and the crimes of genocide. Unfortunately, however, the United Nations has not been able to achieve this objective as it should have. Genocide in Rwanda took place because the United Nations acted too late. Genocide is taking place in Iraq and has been taking place for over five years now because the United Nations moved in the wrong direction. We do hope that these mistakes will be corrected, and that future United Nations action will be timely and in the right direction.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium) *(interpretation from French)*: Today the General Assembly has before it the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization covering this past year. First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his staff in preparing this undeniably useful document. As in earlier years, the report gives us a detailed account of United Nations activities over the past 12 months. It is a valuable reference document which enables us to assess what the United Nations has done, but the report is more than a simple compilation of United Nations activities. It uses past experience to suggest the main thrust of future priorities, which the Secretary-General is no doubt best able to describe.

As I see it, the most important message in the report is the statement that

> "mutually beneficial international institutions of cooperation — with the United Nations foremost among them — are a vital global necessity". *(A/50/1, para. 999)*

Today the international community must face a growing number of global challenges, which no State, however powerful or influential, can handle alone. Solidarity emerges increasingly clearly as the best way of grasping at this increasing globalization, and the United Nations remains the best instrument for this vital solidarity. But the United Nations will be unable to do anything unless we all resolutely commit ourselves to give effect to this solidarity.

The harmonious development of peaceful relations between States is the heart of the Secretary-General's report. This objective is indeed the main focus of United Nations activities. While stability in international relations is still viewed in military terms, it is no longer viewed in military terms only. The Secretary-General notes in his report quite correctly that economic and social development, humanitarian activities and, clearly, the defence and promotion of human rights are the foundations of peace. The Belgian Foreign Minister recently clearly endorsed this approach in his statement in the general debate, and today I can only confirm that Belgium attaches great importance to economic and social development; we must adapt the organs of the United Nations to address this. And Belgium attaches importance to human rights, as everybody is aware. We see these goals as complementary pillars in building peaceful international relations. The series of major conferences, which has just ended, shows the self-evident importance that we all attach today to these objectives. Now that these major conferences are over, we must turn to implementing their results: we must daily build on the foundations laid by those conferences.

The fact that the United Nations has to focus on human rights and humanitarian issues, and economic and social development, does not mean that the United Nations must simply give up in the area of peace-keeping, in the strict sense of the expression. As the Secretary-General said,

> "nor must adversity be allowed to weaken our resolve to carry forward efforts to save human lives and prevent larger conflicts, for which the United Nations remains an irreplaceable instrument". *(A/50/1, para. 7)*

The United Nations is, indeed, an irreplaceable instrument for expressing the universal political will to defend collective security on behalf of all and for all. We think that it would be very dangerous to place the United Nations on the sidelines here. What might be gained in terms of effectiveness would quickly be lost in terms of trust and credibility. This would be a dangerous trend which could lead to deplorable unilateral reflexes. So it seems essential to preserve solidarity in action to preserve the peace. Of course, it is often very difficult to manifest this solidarity. Action in this regard is based on painstaking compromise, and its limits are vague. Setbacks occur frequently. But solidarity still has the merit of uniting the international community in the defence of a common cause. The more principles and international law are affirmed, the easier it will be to implement this work of solidarity.

The Secretary-General devotes considerable attention in his report on the financial crisis of the United Nations. It is clear that the United Nations can do nothing unless we strengthen its financial basis, to which all Member States must contribute. We understand the current questioning of the scale of assessments. The criteria underlying it are perhaps no longer relevant today, and yet, they were established by consensus, and so they can also only be revised by consensus. The United Nations must not be the hostage of continuing differences in views which cannot be reconciled if excessively rigid positions of principle are defended. We trust that the Working Group will be able to successfully conclude its work at this session.

The report of the Secretary-General deals with many other issues on which I have not dwelt. I simply wished

to highlight those issues which I see as essential, which, as I see it, in no way detracts from the importance of other developments in the report: the report is an extremely useful reference document on the activities of the Organization. In conclusion, I would just like once again to thank the Secretary-General and his staff for the report.

Mr. Velliste (Estonia): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express my appreciation for and satisfaction with the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. The Estonian delegation has carefully studied the report. In a few days, Member States will gather at the special commemorative meeting on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Fifty years is an important milestone and a good time to look back at the past year and to examine how the goals fixed in the Charter have been or are being achieved.

The Estonian delegation notes with appreciation the huge work that the Organization as a whole is carrying out. As the Secretary-General rightly points out in his report on the work of the Organization, setbacks must not be allowed to overshadow the success achieved by the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the end of the cold war did not end conflicts in various parts of the world. International peace and friendly relations among nations still remain a goal to be achieved through common efforts. In this respect, the Estonian delegation would like to reiterate that no double standards should be allowed on any of the questions that are in the competence of the United Nations, including security and disarmament issues.

The Estonian delegation takes note of the efforts undertaken to establish solid foundations for international peace, in the areas of development, humanitarian action and human rights. A special working group on an "Agenda for Development" is, on the basis of the principal recommendations submitted to the General Assembly in November 1994, on its way towards developing its text. In this regard it is of great importance that special attention be paid to the means of implementing the Agenda, which deals with a wide range of development matters, including peace, social justice and democracy.

In terms of operational activities for development, the Estonian delegation would like to highlight the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its country office in Estonia which was established in 1993 and which has been enhancing the coordination of international assistance efforts in Estonia and actively contributing to the implementation of the country programme.

The Estonian delegation notes with satisfaction the global approach by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to the problem of narcotic drugs. Estonia, which is having increasing problems connected with narcotic drugs, especially related to drug trafficking through my country, is making efforts in the framework of the UNDCP to participate effectively in international cooperation against illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

One of the tasks of the United Nations has been, and will continue to be, lending humanitarian assistance in emergency situations such as crises, natural disasters, and so forth. The Estonian delegation is of the opinion that the major relief operations during the past year in Kenya, Sudan, Ukraine and Chechnya should bring Member States and the whole Organization to a careful analysis of the underlying causes of the crises. The whole Organization, our Organization, should make all efforts to avoid similar situations in the future if their causes are not beyond human control. Respect for human life is one of the basic principles that we all should be guided by. Nothing can justify the sufferings of thousands of innocent victims.

In the field of human rights, the Estonian delegation notes with appreciation the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially the High Commissioner's efforts to strengthen international cooperation. The Estonian delegation would once more like to stress the need to make the work of the High Commissioner available to a wider audience. Universal respect for human rights should become a norm in the twenty-first century.

The complexity of regional conflicts, and especially of those in the territory of former Yugoslavia, is leading the United Nations to the revision of peace-keeping concepts and to a change in the United Nations peace-keeping role in the Balkans. The Organization should continue its efforts to enhance the effectiveness of peace-keeping. Stand-by arrangements should be further developed in order to allow for rapid deployment of resources and greater efficiency of the operations.

The Organization's increasing financial constraints should induce the United Nations, including its Secretariat, to consider how to make its work more

effective and result-oriented. All overlaps should be avoided and the effectiveness of big international conferences should be carefully considered.

Let me conclude by stating the conviction that, together with all other Member States, we will be able to develop the United Nations into a stronger and more efficient system working for the realization of internationally-agreed goals and objectives.

Mr. Mahmood (Pakistan): I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on the work of the Organization. On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, this report brings out not only the difficulties faced by the United Nations, but also remedial measures and recommendations for responding to various challenges.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the legacy of 1945 must be cherished and carried forward. The United Nations remains an irreplaceable instrument. In the aftermath of the cold war, our hopes for a better and prosperous future for humanity have not been fulfilled. The Secretary-General has reported that new wars and conflicts have erupted between States and that the total volume of development assistance to the developing countries has declined. The outbreak of conflicts has created new demands on the United Nations in the fields of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building. Yet the resources put at the disposal of the United Nations to undertake these responsibilities are woefully inadequate.

The United Nations is facing a serious financial crisis. In the recent past, we have seen a pattern of ever-increasing demands and shrinking resources. The Secretary-General has reported a shortfall in assessed contributions totalling $3.9 billion. As a result, funds for development are drying up, and unpaid reimbursement to troop-contributors has risen to reach $1 billion. These problems, and the lack of safety of United Nations personnel in the field, constitute three immediate concerns for the Organization. In this regard, we must heed the Secretary-General's wise counsel to try to solve the financial crisis facing the United Nations and to strengthen its capacity for preventive diplomacy and early warning mechanisms, particularly in situations where international peace and security are likely to be endangered.

Pakistan is strongly committed to the United Nations role in peace-keeping. We believe that United Nations peace-keeping exemplifies the sustained political commitment of Member States to the concept of collective security and the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite the enormous difficulties and heavy costs involved, Pakistan has been in the forefront of United Nations peace-keeping efforts. Pakistan is one of the few countries that have strongly advocated the United Nations peace-keeping role and offered their services in areas of high risk. The brave soldiers of Pakistan have sacrificed their lives defending peace in Somalia and other parts of the world. At present, Pakistan is the third largest troop-contributing country to United Nations peace-keeping operations. We are, therefore, fully aware of the grave difficulties referred to by the Secretary-General in his report regarding peace-keeping missions and resources. Despite these difficulties, peace-keeping is an important pillar of United Nations diplomacy and must be supported at all costs in order to enhance the credibility of the Organization.

We fully support the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in the Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace". Priority should be given to conflict prevention and to agreement by States to make full use of instruments of preventive action, including the good offices of the Secretary-General, the dispatch of special envoys and the deployment of United Nations missions for preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. We also welcome the Secretary-General's pledge to redouble his efforts to prevent conflicts through early warning, quiet diplomacy and preventive deployment. This could be a substitute for costly politico-military efforts to resolve conflicts.

The Secretary-General, in his annual report of 1994, noted that relations between India and Pakistan continued to be marred over the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, one of the oldest unresolved conflicts still on the United Nations agenda. It is unfortunate that, in the past 50 years, the United Nations has not been able to resolve the Kashmir dispute through the implementation of the Security Council's resolutions. Last year, the Secretary-General offered to exert every possible effort to facilitate the search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue. Pakistan welcomed this offer.

Since last year, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has further deteriorated. In this year's report, the Secretary-General has confirmed increasing violence in Jammu and Kashmir and a further aggravation of relations between India and Pakistan. During the past year, thousands of people have been killed by the Indian security forces. Brutal repression and violations of human

rights continue unabated. Massacres, killings, torture, arbitrary detention, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in Jammu and Kashmir have been widely reported by human rights organizations and international media. The Indian troops have used rape as a weapon of war against Kashmiri women to intimidate the Kashmiri population. The targets of the Indian terror in Kashmir are peaceful civilians. India continues to flout all norms of international humanitarian law. In fact, over the past five years, 600,000 Indian troops have launched a war of aggression against the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, a war recognized as such by the United Nations.

In this context, we note with regret that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies have not played an effective role in persuading India to desist from a systematic genocide of the Kashmiri people. Over 50,000 Kashmiri men, women and children have been killed in the past five years through an organized campaign of State terrorism. It is surprising that none of these brutalities are even mentioned in the United Nations reports. We urge the Commission on Human Rights urgently to dispatch a mission to Jammu and Kashmir to document massive human rights violations committed by the Indian occupation forces.

Pakistan, for its part, has made many offers for a peaceful solution of the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. We have accepted the Secretary-General's offer of good offices. India, from time to time, accuses Pakistan of interference in Jammu and Kashmir. Since May 1990, Pakistan has repeatedly proposed the establishment of a neutral mechanism in Jammu and Kashmir to monitor and survey the situation along the line of control. Last year, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan wrote to the President of the Security Council proposing an increase in the number of observers in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan, which is already deployed in Jammu and Kashmir. India has, unfortunately, rejected all these proposals.

The tensions generated by the Jammu and Kashmir dispute threaten both regional and international peace and security. Pakistan considers it absolutely vital that the United Nations should intercede in order to promote a just and peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council. The Security Council has mandated that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute should be determined in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and impartial plebescite under the auspices of the United Nations. We must pursue this agreed course of action. We agree with the Secretary-General that there is

> "an urgency of seeking a political solution through a meaningful dialogue". *(A/50/1, para. 694)*

India has rejected all overtures made by Pakistan. The moment any round of negotiations starts, India takes a historically incorrect and legally invalid stance that Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. There is a virtual stalemate in Indo-Pakistan dialogue. Therefore, there is a need for intercession by the United Nations Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has maintained contacts with both India and Pakistan. However, in view of the fast-deteriorating situation in Jammu and Kashmir, there is an urgent need to intensify the Secretary-General's mediatory efforts. If India does not accept the Secretary-General's offer of good offices, we would propose that the Secretary-General consider appointing a special representative who could collect correct information about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and facilitate the process for a meaningful dialogue for the solution of the Kashmir issue.

The search for peace is the noblest goal of the international community and our Organization. The old conflicts which continue to defy the efforts of the international community at settlement must be faced in a courageous and determined manner. The Secretary-General has sounded an optimistic note in his report:

> "It is therefore imperative to remain focused on the reality of movement towards long-term achievement and not to permit dismay over immediate difficulties to weaken the positive momentum that has been achieved." *(A/50/1, para. 1000)*

But this is no time for complacency. The United Nations success is only qualified. Today, while we are re-assessing the role of the United Nations, we must strengthen its capacity to play an assertive and forceful role in the pacific settlement of disputes. This is absolutely necessary if we are to remove growing misgivings about the credibility and viability of our Organization.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): This year's report of the Secretary-General again contains an impressive overview of the manifold activities of the Organization. I should like to use the discussion of this "state of the Organization" report to advance a number of ideas of a general nature.

We all know, or should know, that the Organization is facing a crisis. The Secretary-General's report makes it very clear that this is not due to a lack of activities incumbent upon the Organization nor to a lack of response from the side of the Secretariat. I believe, however, that we all suffer from the fact that outside this General Assembly Hall many people, including opinion leaders and politicians, fail to see the political relevance of what we are doing, of what we are debating. They fail to see the political relevance of the scores of resolutions that are being routinely adopted year after year.

This lack of perceived political relevance is the real and deeper reason for the serious financial crisis of this Organization. We have to attack this crisis at its roots. This sole, truly global Organization, with all its proud achievements and lamentable failures, is the mirror image of the collective political will of its membership or the lack thereof. This is true, but we, the representatives to this Organization in New York, Geneva, Vienna and other duty stations, are the ones who are responsible for the creation of this political will. Let us not squander the unique potential of the United Nations in seemingly endless debates and frustrating searches for compromise resolutions.

What can we do? I suggest the following.

Let us support the role of the Secretary-General, especially in those activities that do have a real impact on the state of affairs, such as preventive diplomacy, post-conflict management, peace building and disaster relief, including effective response to complex emergencies, operational activities for development, assistance in the area of capacity-building for democracy and strengthening of the rule of law.

Let us use the General Assembly and all the other deliberative bodies to take positive action in order to give the operational arm of our Organization clear mandates and the necessary resources. It is up to us, the Member States, to focus our work more sharply, especially in the General Assembly and its committees, to make the best possible use of the Organization. The proposals contained in paragraph 184 of the Secretary-General's report are most relevant in this regard.

Let us combine our efforts to help improve — with the help of the professional activities of the Department of Public Information — the public image of the United Nations here in the United States and back home in our various countries.

Let us use the fiftieth anniversary to start serious thinking about reform. This discussion must not be based solely on budgetary considerations, important as they are; it should focus on the need to clearly define priorities, the necessity to streamline the Organization accordingly, to develop synergies through a clustering of activities and to adapt its structure where mainstreaming is necessary. In so doing we must certainly eliminate duplication, waste and mismanagement, where they occur, but we must also ensure continued universal participation in the work of the United Nations system. We must ensure variety in order to keep the system competitive.

Reform must not stop at the level of the Secretariat. We, representatives of the Member States, must also critically appraise our own performance and that of our delegations. Does the sharply increasing number of meetings and requests for reports to be submitted by the Secretary-General really correspond to an increased and improved output of our deliberations? What is the value of the impressive collection of routine resolutions adopted on a yearly basis by countless intergovernmental bodies? Have we ourselves taken the necessary steps to avoid duplication and improve coordination among the various intergovernmental bodies? I do not think we have, but I certainly believe we should.

Let us proceed with organizational and structural reforms by all means, but let us not forget substance.

We must redirect our focus towards the individual's well-being, towards human-centred social and economic development, towards better protection against human rights violations. This Organization must be seen to make a real difference for each and every woman and man, each and every child; it must reach out to the individual.

We must reinforce those activities of the United Nations system that address critical issues affecting today's societies: drug abuse, organized crime, HIV-acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the environment, population and development are keywords that will come to everybody's mind.

Confidence in the United Nations system will depend in particular on the way the system is able to face the future challenges in the field of development. Its unique role in raising public consciousness, in providing information, in defining the international development agenda and in building international consensus must be recognized and strengthened.

Let me very briefly return to the difficult financial situation of the Organization, to which the Secretary-General rightly devotes so much attention in his report. There should be no illusion: whereas this certainly is not the first financial crisis the Organization has had to face, it is the most serious one; for the first time the very existence of the United Nations is called into doubt, through the cumulative effects of its financial and political predicament. The Special Commemorative Meeting which we will hold next week will have failed if it does not give us a strong and clear mandate to combine our best efforts to come up with workable solutions within a reasonable period of time.

The pillars of such a solution should be clear for everybody to see: political commitments to honour the relevant Charter obligations — obligations assumed by Member States under international law — that is, to pay assessed contributions in full and on time; a schedule for the payment of outstanding arrears; a reformed system for the scales of assessment which must reflect today's economic realities, paying due attention to the principle of capacity to pay; and balanced arrangements for incentives and disincentives.

The High-level Working Group established by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session should be used as the most suitable forum for sincere and action-oriented negotiations.

Most importantly, and this will be my last point: we should strongly support the Secretary-General in his efforts to improve organizational performance by the Secretariat so that mandates set by the General Assembly are delivered in an effective and timely manner. In this context, the new performance appraisal system should take us an important step closer to the goal of an efficient output-oriented Secretariat. It also provides a means for appropriate recognition of individual staff performance.

This Organization relies on the high quality and dedication of its staff; let us strengthen the ideal of an international civil service, let us ensure supreme standards and let us protect the United Nations staff against undeserved criticism; and let us find a way to pay special tribute to our staff on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): The opportunity offered the General Assembly to comment upon the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is of particular relevance as we celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. As the Secretary-General himself points out in the conclusions of his thought-provoking report, the fiftieth anniversary is helping to create

> "a renewed sense of commitment to fulfil the original promise set down in the Charter 50 years ago." *(A/50/1, para. 990).*

This renewed commitment can only profit from constructive criticism. We have already entered a phase of reappraisal that should lead to improvements.

My first comment would relate to the need for preservation and revitalization of the role of the General Assembly as the centre for discussion of all matters falling within the scope of the Charter. This Hall of universal representation, where the sovereign equality of States is given full expression, retains crucial functions in focusing the different fields of activity of the Organization through the eyes of its 185 participants. Such functions are only enhanced by the fact that a number of Working Groups are now examining, under its aegis, some of the most relevant issues for our common future. We will have the occasion to deal individually with each one of these subjects at the proper time and place. We are especially looking forward to the debate on the reform of the Security Council.

As the guiding force behind the activity of these working groups, Mr. President, you have assumed a set of responsibilities that are truly impressive. We reaffirm our confidence in your capacity to orient our work towards the most productive results, and we wish to assure you of our intention to participate actively in the efforts to make the fiftieth session a true milestone in the evolution of this body.

As work proceeds on "An Agenda for Development", "An Agenda for Peace", reform of the Security Council, the financial situation and strengthening of the Organization, Member States are becoming increasingly aware of the linkages between these exercises. Grasping this fact and all its implications is in itself a challenging task.

The report's sub-chapter on the General Assembly indicates that the Assembly devotes less attention to regional conflicts — while pointing out that several have been resolved during the last decade — and that more time is being devoted to economic and social matters and other questions. This statement deserves some comment.

While the resolution of conflicts in some areas of the world constitutes reason for rejoicing, a number of other serious conflicts have emerged in recent years, increasing the workload of the Security Council and the presence of United Nations troops worldwide. More human and material resources are devoted to peace-keeping operations today than ever before in the history of the Organization. More resources are spent on peace-keeping than on any other United Nations activity. No other topic on our vast agenda seems to rouse greater attention or to stir world public opinion more than the role of the United Nations in controlling, settling or preventing regional conflict.

The fact that the General Assembly devotes less attention to regional conflicts does not, unfortunately, result from success in securing international peace. As the report itself aptly acknowledges, the Security Council is meeting on an almost daily basis to consider precisely these conflicts, and its deliberations have generated intensified interest. Notwithstanding the many steps that have been taken to increase transparency in the Council's methods, however, the importance of matters pertaining to peace and security is such, in the context of the Organization's overall mandate, that a more fluid relationship between the Security Council and the general membership is clearly called for.

It might be added that the supposedly greater attention being accorded to economic and social matters by the General Assembly does not signify that the debate on such issues is as productive as it should be. Concern with development remains largely ancillary to concern with peace and security, while the prospects afforded by the end of the cold war for a renewed partnership for development still await clearer definition.

The report refers, in paragraph 42, to "harmony and cohesion" in the Security Council. This is undoubtedly a positive signal of growing understanding among the members of the Council. On the other hand, we should not be fearful of the manifestation of diverging views when differences of opinion exist. If the Security Council is to act on behalf of all Member States, as the Charter requires, the full range of their views should be adequately voiced.

It seems that on certain occasions — and this is a matter of concern — the decision-making process has been shifted to forums outside the Council itself, without the necessary regard for transparency and accountability. Members of the Council, troop-contributing nations and the United Nations membership in general have thus experienced serious difficulties in following the development of situations in which there is a clear universal interest.

Administrative and financial matters have acquired a new urgency. The Organization cannot remain on the brink of bankruptcy without having its credibility eroded. As we have maintained on different occasions, the most obvious solution to the current financial ills of the Organization is the prompt and full payment by Member States of their assessed contributions. We must endeavour to further rationalize the budget and aim for a more efficient machinery. But the prospect of programmes for the promotion of economic and social development being sacrificed owing to difficulties in meeting increased expenditure in other fields is a cause of no small concern.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the decrease in funds for development, and we could not agree more with his call for a new vision of development and a universal commitment to it. We maintain our deepest solidarity towards the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa, which are in dire need of emergency assistance. We emphasize, however, the distinction between the critical demand for resources to mitigate humanitarian or social strife and the need for a comprehensive approach to development capable of associating countries from the North and the South in a joint effort to stimulate growth worldwide. This is the essential task of "An Agenda for Development".

Ambassador Ricupero's appointment to the important post of Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is mentioned in the Secretary-General's report. We believe that, under his guidance, UNCTAD will be in a position to play an active role in advancing the cause of development, through strategies that will help developing countries to take full advantage of opportunities offered by trade, investment and technology flows, as well as through enhanced South-South cooperation.

In the period covered by the report, United Nations initiatives in Africa have produced an undeniably positive impact in several war-torn nations. With regard to Mozambique and Angola, we are glad to note that the peace process is taking hold in these two southern African countries with which Brazil shares a historic and cultural heritage. More recently, an agreement has also been reached between the conflicting factions in Liberia. We are hopeful that the gradual normalization of conditions in Rwanda will be consolidated into a new

chapter of peace for the entire beleaguered region of the African Great Lakes.

The economic and social rehabilitation of these nations represents a test for the Organization's capacity to implement sustained action aimed at post-conflict peace-building. In the same vein, we have been calling attention to the role that development programmes can play in the context of preventive diplomacy.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees deserves credit for her untiring efforts to mobilize the agency's emergency-response capacity and to seek preventive and solution-oriented approaches to these huge problems.

In the disarmament area, the international community should not presume that all problems related to weapons of mass destruction have been solved with the end of the cold war. On the contrary, renewed efforts are necessary to sustain the momentum towards the complete elimination of the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological warfare.

The experience accumulated by the Organization in dealing with the post-cold-war international context is of great value for our future endeavours. Much wisdom can be derived from the picture of the world presented by the Secretary-General's report. Lessons are being learned that will enable us to develop a better grasp of the realistic possibilities of the Organization's action in the current, changing environment. Brazil will remain closely involved in the effort to enable the United Nations to realize its full potential for peace and development in the years to come.

Mr. Alakwaa (Yemen) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: At the outset I should like to express my delegation's thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his successful efforts in preparing his report on the work of the Organization (A/50/1). We believe the report is a comprehensive and useful document. To save the Assembly's valuable time, I shall dwell only on paragraph 24 thereof.

I should like to express our sincere thanks and deep appreciation to the Security Council for its action with regard to the tragic situation of our people — a situation that is due to the failed separatist attempt of 1994. There is no doubt that the Council's action was prompted by the awareness that peace and stability in the region required the protection of our people's natural right to preserve its national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Council acted, in the light of that awareness, with sagacity and adroitness.

I wish to underscore here what our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Abdulkarim Al-Eryani, stated before this august Assembly on 11 October 1995 regarding our continuing endeavour to promote and consolidate the democratic process in our country on the basis of political and economic pluralism, respect for human rights, freedom of the press and freedom of expression. I should like to add that we have implemented Security Council resolutions 924 (1994) and 931 (1994) and that in accordance with the general amnesty proclaimed by His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic, all those who had been duped by the conspirators have now returned to the country. Only a few of the perpetrators of the ill-fated secessionist plot remain abroad. The doors of our country remain open, however, to that handful. They can return to Yemen to defend themselves against the charges brought against them. As stated by the President of the Republic in a press conference, they can return to the country and choose their defence counsel from outside or inside the country. We guarantee them a fair trial and undertake to abide by the ruling of the court.

If necessary, this Organization, as well as any other intergovernmental or non-governmental organization, can send observers to the trials in order for such Organizations to satisfy themselves as to the soundness of the legal proceedings in trying the defendants. The Secretary-General could advise the Security Council to end discussion of this subject, since there is no need for the Council to remain seized of it.

Before concluding, I should like to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative for their efforts in assisting my country in overcoming the consequences of the tragic situation caused by that unfortunate secessionist attempt. I should like also to express our special appreciation to the international community and the intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations which provided humanitarian assistance to the areas of our country affected by the crisis. At the same time, I wish to appeal to the international community and to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to expedite the provision of adequate assistance to us so that we can deal with the following challenges: the need to remedy the severe damage to our national economy and infrastructure caused by the failed attempt; the need to remove deadly anti-personnel mines to save the lives of

women, children and other innocent people who fall victim to those devices daily; and, the need to cope, despite the scarcity of our resources, with the social and economic burden resulting from the flows into Yemen of refugees from Somalia and some other neighbouring countries. While we thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its efforts in our country, we must request more support to it. We must say, however, that we do not consider this to be an alternative to the effort the international community should make in helping our brethren in Somalia to end the infighting in their country, achieve national reconciliation, restore peace and stability and rebuild their country.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers, including any statements in the exercise of the right of reply, under this item tomorrow morning.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that the announcement of voluntary contributions to the 1996 programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will take place on Friday, 17 November, in the morning.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.